

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A load control device having a power control element connected in series to a series circuit of a load and an alternating power supply, and a snubber circuit comprising a series circuit of a resistor and a capacitor connected in parallel to the power control element, further comprising:

suppressing means for suppressing current flowing through the snubber circuit to a value smaller than a minimum operating current of the load when a load control on the load is stopped during a period when the power control element is turned off and when a power control of the load is in an operation state with the alternating power supply being applied thereto.

2. (currently amended) A load control device as claimed in claim 1,
wherein the suppressing means is a switch connected in series to the snubber circuit in series the resistor and the capacitor both of which constitute the snubber circuit.

3. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 2,
wherein the switch is a mechanical relay.

4. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 2,
wherein the switch is a solid-state relay.

5. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 2,
wherein the switch is a photo-MOS transistor brought into conduction when light hits a gate thereof.

6. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 2,

wherein the switch is a bi-directional gate-controlled triode thyristor.

7. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 1,
wherein the suppressing means is a thermistor forming the snubber circuit and
having a negative temperature coefficient.

8. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 7,
wherein the thermistor is placed in close proximity to the power control element.

9. (original) A load control device having a power control element connected in
series to a series circuit of a load and an alternating power supply, and a snubber circuit
comprising a series circuit of a resistor and a capacitor connected in parallel to the power control
element, further comprising:

suppressing means for suppressing current flowing through the snubber circuit
during a predetermined period immediately following an end of a predetermined delay time
which begins when the power control element shifts from an ON state to an OFF state.

10. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 9,
wherein the suppressing means is a switch connected to the snubber circuit in
series.

11. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 10,
wherein the switch is a mechanical relay.

12. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 10,
wherein the switch is a solid-state relay.

13. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 10,

wherein the switch is a photo-MOS transistor brought into conduction when light hits a gate thereof.

14. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 10,
wherein the switch is a bi-directional gate-controlled triode thyristor.
15. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 9,
wherein the suppressing means is a thermistor forming the snubber circuit and
having a negative temperature coefficient.
16. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 15,
wherein the thermistor is placed in close proximity to the power control element.
17. (original) A load control device as claimed in claim 10,
wherein the load control device further comprising:
a delay circuit for causing a signal for turning off the switch delayed from a signal
for turning off the power control element.